



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE JONATHAN STEINBERG
136TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 4020
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
CAPITOL: 860-240-8585
TOLL FREE: 800-842-8267
HOME: 203-226-6749
E-MAIL: Jonathan.Steinberg@cga.ct.gov

VICE CHAIR
ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
MEMBER
AGING COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

Testimony in Support of HB 5625

**An Act Exempting Certain Municipalities from the Affordable Housing
Land Use Appeals Act**

Housing Committee

February 14, 2013

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Butler, Senator McKinney, Representative Miller and members of the Housing Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 5625, a proposed amendment to Statute 8-30g.

8-30g, Connecticut's affordable housing statute, has been encouraging development of housing diversity for more than twenty years. Thousands of affordable housing units can be attributed to its existence. It has been effective in achieving real housing choice, but only up to a point.

8-30g has significantly different impacts on Connecticut municipalities, as was, to a degree, intended. As written, 8-30g has established an impossible standard for some communities, particularly those already heavily developed. As a matter of fact, some towns may *never* be able to achieve the 10% affordable housing stock stipulated in the statute to attain an exemption from the more punitive aspects of the statute. For those municipalities, the statute's "encouragement" comes without any real expectation of eventual relief.

If 8-30g is to withstand the test of time, it needs to be updated to align the goal with the benefit. Communities which have embraced the concept of expanded affordable housing should be acknowledged for that commitment, not continually punished for being unable to grasp an unreachable "brass ring."

To strengthen the statute, the proposed bill seeks to provide relief to towns which have made – and will continue to make -- the sincere effort to create more affordable housing. The language provides an exemption to municipalities which have taken the initiative by establishing affordable housing zones which adhere to recognized Smart Growth principles such as the existence of essential infrastructure, particularly access to mass transportation –in accord with Connecticut's push for Transit Oriented Development.

The introducers of this bill, as well as related bills, are open to discussion on what ought to constitute a genuine commitment to creating affordable housing zones, so that the Legislature can be confident that, not only will 8-30g not be compromised, it will be enhanced to yield more short-term affordable housing units than it would have under current statute language.

As this Committee has seen, each new long session brings literally dozens of proposed amendments to this statute. Perhaps it's time to consider whether there are fresh ideas which will sustain the commitment to housing diversity for decades to come.

Again, I thank the Committee for its time and its ongoing commitment to enhancing housing options.